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## READINESS OF LITHUANIAN CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS SUFFERING FROM MOBBING: IS THE POTENTIAL EXPLOITED?

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**Abstract.** Research conducted in different parts of the world shows that mobbing is a relevant organizational and social problem, which can be also addressed by religious organizations. Inspirations of Christian values, combined with organisational management, become the outcome of potentially significant decisions. However, the analysis of scientific publications using keywords “religious organizations”, “Christian organizations”, “Christianity”, “mobbing”, “assistance”, “values”, “value congruence” shows that there is a lack of such type of research both in Lithuania and abroad, which underpins the novelty, originality and demand for the research not only in Lithuania’s but also in the international context. Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the potential exploited by Lithuanian Christian organizations, providing assistance to persons suffering from mobbing. To achieve this aim, three objectives were formulated: (1) to analyze religious organizations’ possibilities to recognize workplace mobbing; (2) to discuss the circumstances determining value congruence/incongruity in religious organizations; (3) to identify strengths and weaknesses of organizations, which can help or hinder assistance provision to the victims of mobbing. The study involved 9 persons working in Christian organizations. The survey was conducted using the semi-structured interview method. The research results demonstrate that religious organizations perform spiritual assistance, counselling, and charitable activities but lack knowledge of the phenomenon of workplace mobbing and the possibilities of helping the victims. Poor efforts of the religious organizations in staff training, narrow activity specialisations and value incongruity not only limit the possibilities to help the victims of mobbing but also reduce the initiative of employees themselves.

**Keywords:** religious organizations, Christian organizations, Christianity, workplace mobbing, assistance, values, value congruence, Lithuania.

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### INTRODUCTION

**Relevance of the research.** Speaking metaphorically, the phenomenon of workplace mobbing, identified and described by H. Leymann (1990, 1993), became a peculiar “Pandora’s Box”, the content of which has been inexhaustible in the last three decades, going deep into the tragic consequences for victims (Leymann, Gustafsson, 1996; Duffy, Sperry, 2012) and the scale of this phenomenon, encompassing different professional activity areas (e.g., Rissi et al.,

2016; Picakciefe et al., 2017; Erdis et al., 2019; etc.). In the context of these studies, focusing on ways whose application could prevent the mobbing process and/or solve the already existing conflicts, several trends receiving the attention of the researchers of this phenomenon come to prominence. On the one hand, preventive and intervention measures applied in the organization, which include changes in management, employee training, etc., can be quite efficient (Kolodej, 2005; Asi, Okanli, 2015). On the other hand, organizations not always accentuate the problem and take adequate actions, especially when the leaders themselves are involved in the mobbing process (Vveinhardt, Žukauskas, 2012; Erdis et al., 2019). Therefore, the possibilities of external assistance for the victims of mobbing, encompassing psychotherapy (Rissi et al., 2016), counselling or legal assistance (Vveinhardt, 2009; Vveinhardt, Žukauskas, 2012) and the like, are analyzed in parallel. However, it is noted that the victims of mobbing do not receive adequate assistance from specialists (psychologists, lawyers, etc.) (Vveinhardt, Žukauskas, 2012). In addition, legal aid possibilities vary from country to country, protection against mobbing is ambiguous (Lippel, 2011; Petrylaitė, 2011; Stephen, Sasi, 2017), and persons who have become victims are no longer able to make use of existing legal possibilities (Kolodej, 2005; Duffy, Sperry, 2007). Therefore, it is not a coincidence that research on assistance to the victim of mobbing highlights the importance of moral assistance of the closest environment (Kolodej, 2005). Based on the ecological model, several authors have pointed out that several layers ranging from the microsystem to the macrosystem interact in mobbing processes (Johnson, 2011; Lee, 2011). However, these ideas are not developed sufficiently widely, particularly with regard to the role performed by religious communities in assistance provision. Involvement of religious communities in the assistance to the victims of mobbing can be relevant in several respects. *First*, participation of clergy and laity in spiritual assistance provision has long been recognized as practice that has served the purpose (Bullis, 1996; Zenkert et al., 2014; Benson et al., 2016; etc.). *Second*, Christian organizations have a wide traditionally formed network. For example, in Lithuania alone, there are 1155 Christian religious organizations, of which 896 are Roman Catholics (The Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 2017). *Third*, Christian organizations follow traditionally defined value principles that are orientated to assistance to suffering persons (Lenzenweger et al., 1989; Ratzinger, 2000; Giussani, 2007; etc.). And *fourth*, employees and volunteers of these organizations should foster the same values, which increases the effectiveness of activities (Arruñada, 2010; Vveinhardt, Gulbovaite, 2017). However, having entered keywords “religious organizations”, “Christian organizations”, “Christianity”, “mobbing”, “assistance”, “values”, “value

congruence” into Web of Science Core Collection (Clarivate Analytics), SCOPUS, and other databases, no research covering these aspects was found; only several indirectly related studies were detected. Therefore, the **research problem** is formulated by the question: How do Lithuanian Christian organizations use their potential, providing assistance to the victims of workplace mobbing?

**The research aim** is to investigate the potential exploited by Lithuanian Christian organizations, providing assistance to persons suffering from mobbing.

To achieve this aim, three **objectives** were formulated: (1) to analyze religious organizations’ possibilities to recognize workplace mobbing; (2) to discuss the circumstances determining value congruence/incongruity in religious organizations; (3) to identify strengths and weaknesses of organizations, which can help or hinder assistance provision to the victims of mobbing.

**Research methods.** The theoretical part of the research was prepared by analyzing research in the areas of social sciences, humanities, the fields of management, psychology, theology and other sciences, mainly published in peer reviewed journals in Web of Science Core Collection (Clarivate Analytics) and/or SCOPUS databases. To conduct the empirical research; i.e., the semi-structured interview, based on the scientific literature analysis, questions for prospective research participants were prepared. Data collected during the interviews were analyzed based on *Emic* and *Etic* perspectives approach proposed by J. L. Krysik and J. Finn (2010).

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

The conception of spiritual assistance arises from the religious context but is not limited to it (Dyson et al., 1997; Newman, 2004; Lazenby, 2010; White et al., 2011; etc.). Its content consists of compassion, selfless service, work as a form of mediation (McCormick, 1994), God as a system of faith, and the relation with other persons (Dyson et al., 1997). In this context, J. Fisher (2011) distinguished several integrally related areas: personal, in which the person is related to himself; the community area based on close interpersonal relationships; the environment area, including nature; and the transcendental area related to something beyond human boundaries. In addition, as J. Jones et al. (2016) emphasize, spirituality is associated with a holistic, person-centred approach, seeking to restore the sense of well-being, recognize individual problem coping strategies, restoring the perception of meaning and aim. This is relevant in case of marginal experiences of personal existence while the person is searching for

meaning (Cotton et al., 2009), but in practice, providing assistance, this often remains a challenge that is difficult to cope with (Jones et al., 2016) when the person experiences physical and spiritual suffering. Therefore, scholars studying spiritual assistance possibilities often focus on mortally ill and hospitalized persons (McBrien, 2006; Lazenby, 2010; Sadat et al., 2017) as well as on social work practice (Tigchelaar et al., 2016; Moffatt, Oxhandler, 2018), highlighting the person's spiritual growth integrating biological, psychological, social, and interpersonal human relationship links (Carroll, 2001). In addition, attention was drawn to the fact that religious spirituality can help coping with anxiety (Rowell et al., 2019), various psychological traumas (Zenkert et al., 2014; Benson et al., 2016). Although spiritual assistance strategies are applied by both lay professionals and clerics, consultants of religious organizations (Bullis, 1996; Ruth-Sahd et al., 2018), it is noted that religious faith and the sense of identity related to it as well as perceived transcendental significance have a peculiar effect (Dyson et al., 1997; Kiesling et al., 2006; White et al., 2011), especially for persons who experienced psychological traumas (Vis, Boynton, 2008). It is urged to consider this aspect in assistance provision and alongside with integration of psychological and religious interventions, the identity of the assistance provider's and the client's worldviews is emphasized (Utsch, 2007). In other words, there is a necessity for congruence of attitudes and values, which creates a favourable medium for interpersonal understanding, interaction and effective assistance.

Congruence of organizational and employee values determines that employees favourably assess performed work, which ultimately determines the effectiveness of the whole organization's activities (Posner, 1992; Vveinhardt, Gulbovaitė, 2016; 2017). This stems from positive relationships based on shared values and promotes mutual trust and positive communication (Edwards, Cable, 2009), job satisfaction while taking care of others (Verplanken, 2004), reduces the risk of burnout (Veage et al., 2014), which is particularly relevant in the activity areas in which employees have frequent intense direct contacts with customers. Besides, a number of studies show that another factor determining better quality of activity is job satisfaction (Kalliath et al., 1999; Edwards, Cable, 2009; Spanjol et al., 2015), which simultaneously promotes engagement in voluntary activities, providing assistance to others (Schaubroeck, Ganster, 1991). This is relevant to the quality of activities of both profit-seeking and non-profit organizations' employees. Research shows that in non-profit organizations, value congruence is positively related to organizational change and its support (Lamm et al., 2010), information sharing (Cazier et al., 2007), etc. On the other hand, it is noted that non-conformity of values has a negative impact on volunteers working in the organization

(Newton, Mazur, 2016), and employees can save energy when their goals are not harmonized with organizational goals (Jensen et al., 2019). In other words, non-profit organisations and organisations performing social missions should ensure that the values they foster correspond to traditional values of culture represented by employees, as this will affect not only the organisation's internal environment but also customer relationships (Vveinhardt, Gulbovaitė, 2012). Other research shows that traditional values fostered by religion, such as love, justice, respect for the individual, make a positive impact on the organisation's human resources and their work quality (Koys, 2001; Arruñada, 2010) as well as influence coping with stressful situations (Ano, Vasconcelles, 2005) that are often encountered by persons volunteering in organizations (Jenkinson et al., 2013; Claxton-Oldfield, 2016; Kaveh et al., 2017). In this context, religiosity, religious practice can also help to overcome stress (Choo, Smith, 2016).

Analyzing links how values influence antisocial behaviour, R. P. Monteiro et al. (2017) concluded that human values were an important variable, seeking to understand young people's aggressive behaviour and bullying. Another study (Menesini et al., 2013) showed that, irrespective of gender, moral values had led to manifestation of both traditional and cyber bullying in interpersonal relationships. The role of values has also been confirmed in studies investigating aggressive behaviour manifesting itself by bullying among adults; i.e., at the workplace (Cowie et al., 2002; Yamada, 2008). In this context, the significant role is played not only by clashes of different values, the value environment within the organization itself but also by the social assistance to the victim who is not always successfully applying conflict resolution strategies. For example, D. Zapf and C. Gross (2010) argue that bullying means an unresolved social conflict that has reached a high level of escalation and increased power imbalance. Their research shows that victims did not always use constructive ways of solution and were forced to leave the job. Therefore, assistance of the social environment is often named as one of the ways of assistance to the victim (Zapf, Gross, 2010; Carroll, Lauzier, 2014). Although the importance of legal assistance to victims is often emphasized, according to S. L. Johnson (2009), legal aid is not the only way, although it provides certain protection. Victims experiencing intense attack find it difficult to adequately assess the situation and independently resolve the conflict, therefore, they need more extensive assistance. Thus, several research results emphasize the importance of supervision and counselling (Greene, 2003; Drüge et al., 2013; Drüge et al., 2015); however, victims' testimonies show that they find it difficult to find colleagues, friends, consultants or doctors (Vveinhardt, Žukauskas, 2012; Acquadro Maran et al., 2018). G. Namie et al. (2009) name such assistance measures in the USA as toll-free

telephone crisis line, the society's education, counselling, training, etc., although acknowledge that they are insufficient. This calls for greater involvement of communities and non-governmental organizations.

Research Methodology. The analysis of scientific literature and systematisation of research were followed by preparation of research methodology and development of the research instrument consisting of the following three main parts: (1) *perception of the problem in religious organizations*; (2) *value congruence of religious organizations and their members*; (3) *readiness of the members of the organization to provide assistance to the victims of mobbing* (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Parts of the research instrument and the context for categories and subcategories

Parts	Context for categories and subcategories	Sources
Perception of the problem in religious organizations	Because there is a lack of research directly analyzing the perception of the workplace mobbing problem in religious organizations, the study is also based on the research considering how organizations respond to various challenges arising in their activity practice in the religious context.	Ano, Vasconcelles, 2005; Cotton et al., 2006; Vensel, 2012; Choo, Smith, 2016; Sadat et al., 2017; Moffatt, Oxhandler, 2018; etc.
Value congruence of religious organizations and their members	Attention is drawn to the way in which organizations solve problems caused by value congruence/incongruity, the impact of these decisions on the efficacy of employee activities, and the role of employee religiosity in this context.	Posner, 1992; Koys, 2001; Verplanken, 2004; Arruñada, 2010; Lazenby, 2010; Charbonnier-Voirin et al., 2016; Malbasic et al., 2018; etc.
Readiness of the members of the organization to provide assistance to the victims of mobbing	The study assesses the research analyzing the responses of the organisation's members, that is, the employees of the various levels of the organization, as well as the very organizations' responses to workplace mobbing. Alongside, the trajectories of spiritual assistance, investigated in the research, are taken into account.	Bullis, 1996; Posner, 1992; Kolodej, 2005; Lazenby, 2010; Vensel, 2012; Zenkert, et al., 2014; Carroll, Lauzier, 2014; Benson et al., 2016; etc.

Preparation of the basic interview questions was grounded on systematized research (Table 1), on the basis of which three categories were distinguished, detailing every category by two subcategories: 1) *provided spiritual assistance*: ways and accessibility of assistance; 2) *competencies of assistance providers*: human resources and competence development; 3) *practice of assistance provision to the victims of mobbing*: specialists' possessed knowledge of workplace mobbing and provided assistance (Table 2).

9 basic questions, which were further used as a basis for interviewing informants, were assigned to the distinguished categories and subcategories. Based on the topics discussed in the first two categories, the informants' and their organisations' experiences in providing spiritual assistance and organisation of that assistance are investigated. Afterwards, taking into account that informants may be unfamiliar with the workplace mobbing phenomenon, essential information is provided; later, the possessed experiences are detailed. The above-mentioned basic questions were supplemented with value congruence aspects, which were used to reveal value correspondence of both religious organizations and their members.



**Table 2.** Categories, subcategories of the research instrument and the context for interview questions

Categories	Subcategories	Context for interview questions	Sources
Provided spiritual assistance (PSA)	Ways of provided assistance	The type of spiritual assistance provided to applicants is investigated. It is examined in what ways persons seeking assistance find specialists providing assistance.	White et al., 2011; Tigchelaar et al., 2016; Wright, 2017; Moffatt, Oxhandler, 2018; etc.
	Accessibility of assistance		
Competencies of assistance providers (CAP)	Organisational human resources, providing the assistance	It is investigated what education professionals providing assistance have and how their competencies are developed: personally or through the efforts of the organization.	Namie, Namie, 2009; Vveinhardt, Žukauskas, 2012; Benson et al., 2016; Ruth-Sahd et al., 2018; etc.
	Competence development of specialists providing assistance		
Practice of assistance provision to the victims of mobbing (PAP)	Specialists' possessed knowledge of workplace mobbing	It is identified what professionals providing assistance know about workplace mobbing. Information is collected about experiences, having encountered victims of this phenomenon, and what measures were used to provide assistance.	Leymann, 1993; Kolodej, 2005; Ferris, 2009; Namie, Namie, 2009; Lee, 2011; Vveinhardt, Žukauskas, 2012; Vensel, 2012; etc.
	Provided assistance		

Source: Deikus, M. (2019). „Kiek kartų tai padarėte vienam iš šių mažiausiųjų mano brolių, man padarėte” (Mt 25,40): pagalba nukentėjusiems nuo mobingo Lietuvos krikščioniškose organizacijose. *Iššūkiai ir socialinė atsakomybė versle-Challenges and Social Responsibility in Business* (in Press).

The data collected during the study were analyzed based on *Emic* and *Etic* perspectives approach proposed by J. L. Krysik and J. Finn (2010), when a quote reflecting the investigated person's attitude, thinking, which is significant in the researcher's opinion, is given (in the study, *in italics*) and a story is developed, the researcher's interpretations are presented. As stated by L. M. Given (2008), this approach is very important, seeking to understand how people perceive the world around them. Although this attitude is more subjective than objective, comparing it with the quantitative approach (Morey, Luthans, 1984), but it is widely used as a reliable method (Morris et al., 1999; Krysik, Finn, 2010).

## RESEARCH ETHICS, ORGANIZATION AND RESULTS

**Research ethics.** The study is conducted in conformity with the Code of Academic Ethics (2012), which is based on fundamental values outlining the researcher's responsibility for the society and morality, both conducting the research and publishing its results. During the interviews, the following ethical principles were followed (Gurevičius et al., 2009): the principle of the right not to be offended; the principle of the right not to be exploited; the research utility principle; the principle of respect for the person's dignity; the principles of justice, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.

**Organization of the research.** *In the first stage of the organization of the research,* Christian organizations registered in Lithuania, which in public space announce that they provide assistance, were selected, and 37 e-mails were sent out. The invitations to participate in the study, presenting its aim, course, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality of the

prospective research participants and highlighting the assistance to sufferers (i.e., focusing on Christian values), were sent out at the officially indicated e-mail addresses of these organisations. Since feedback was received only from two organizations (the refusals to take part in the research were submitted), *in the second stage of research organization* the organisations' representatives were addressed by telephone, asking to indicate concrete persons providing spiritual assistance. *In the third stage of the research organization*, the recommended persons were contacted, and upon informants' consent to participate in the research, the research aim was exhaustively presented and further use of data was explained. Upon the receipt of verbal voluntary consents to participate in the research and permissions to record interviews with the dictaphone, it was ensured that upon transcription, the electronic record media would be destroyed. The interviews lasted from 1 to 1,5 hours. When data saturation was reached, the survey was completed, having interviewed 9 informants. After transcribing records, the electronic media were destroyed.

**Research participants.** Interviews were conducted with 9 persons (hereinafter, informants) working in different Christian organizations, who hold a Master's degree in Social Work, Spiritual Counselling, Theology and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Theology. The informants' (encoded as I1, I2 ... I9) demographic data are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Summarized data of informants

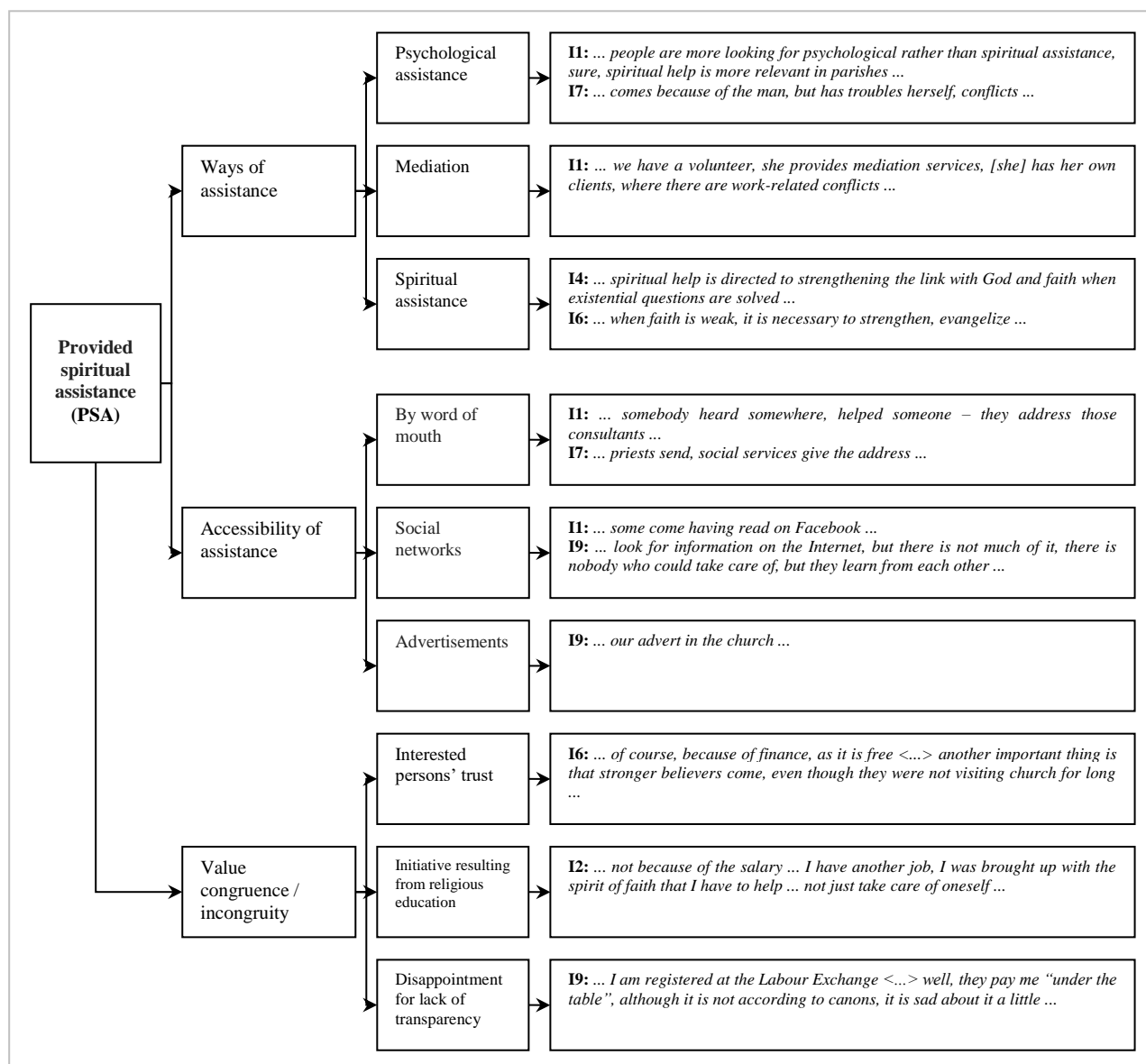
Code	Age	Gender	Education	Activity
I1	48	Female	Master's degree in Social Work	Manager
I2	25	Female	Master's degree in Social Work	Counsellor
I3	34	Male	Master's degree in Theology	Manager
I4	26	Female	Master's degree in Social Work	Counsellor
I5	27	Male	Bachelor's degree in Theology	Cleric
I6	24	Female	Master's degree in Spiritual Counselling and Assistance	Counsellor
I7	26	Female	Master's degree in Spiritual Counselling and Assistance	Counsellor
I8	41	Male	Master's degree in Theology	Head of the department
I9	37	Female	Bachelor's degree in Social Work	Social worker

Informants' age ranged from 24 to 48 years; and responsibilities, from the ordinary employee to the manager, which shows that they cover different age groups and experiences. All the informants have acquired higher education, which by fields can be divided into three groups; the first, social work specialists; the second, theologians; and the third, the specialists of spiritual counselling and assistance.

**Research results.** Three sub-categories (*ways of assistance, accessibility of assistance and value congruence/incongruity*) are distinguished in the category of provided spiritual assistance (PSA), which in the analysis of informants' answers, are broken down into additional further subcategories (Fig. 1). Within the subcategory *ways of assistance*, three more further subcategories come to prominence, showing the trends of provided assistance. Although it is



not always possible to distinguish between spiritual assistance (compassion, support, faith strengthening by evangelizing) and psychological help, since interested persons need assistance solving emotional problems and conflicts, the informant representing a public institution tends to entrust spiritual matters to the ecclesiastical parish (for spiritualization), keeping himself aloof from their solution and focusing on psychological assistance and mediation. This way, a peculiar specialization comes to prominence, although the founder of the public institution is a religious institution. In this case, spiritual counsellors provide a more universal assistance, but their specialization, again, has limitations.

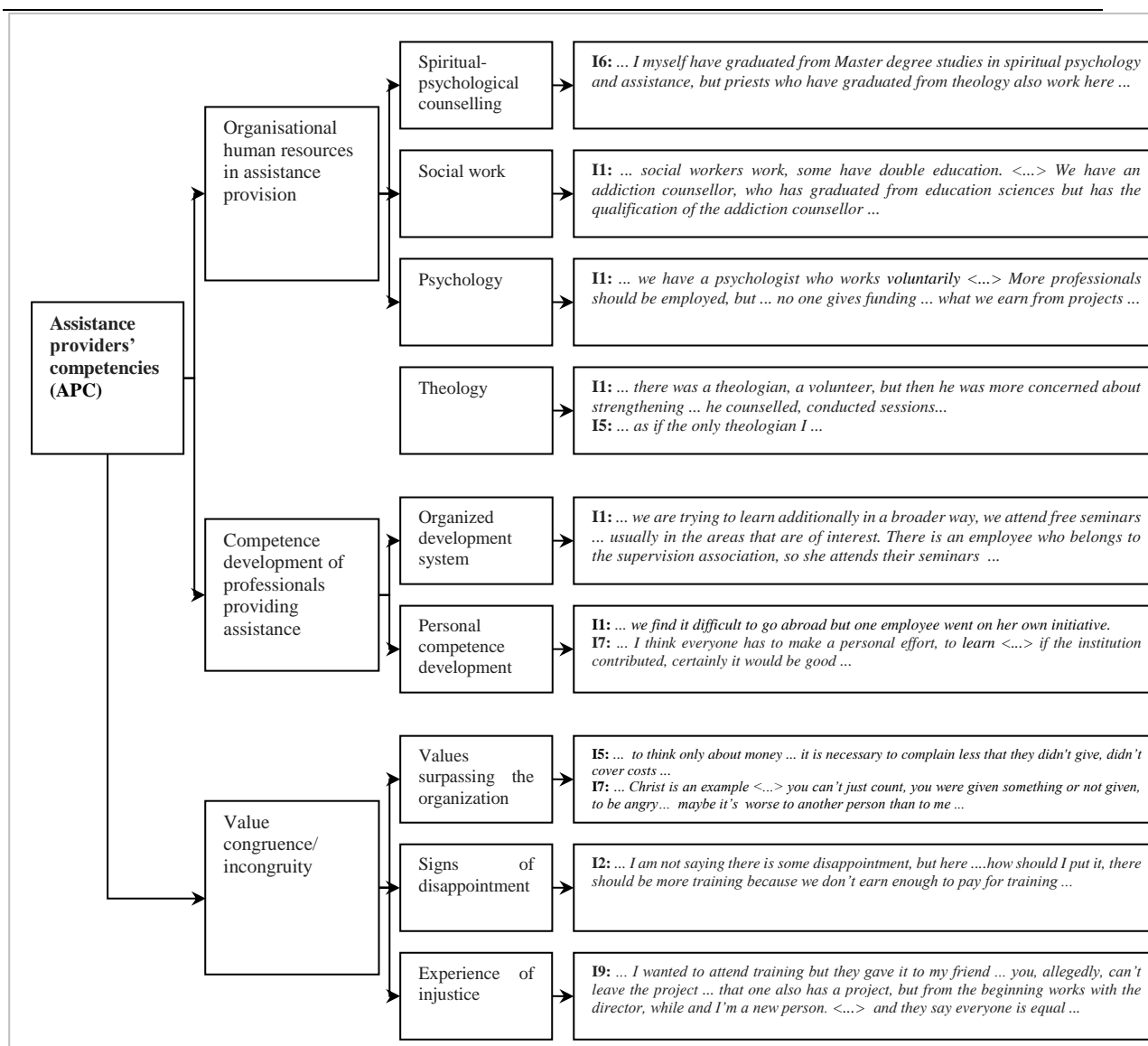


**Fig. 1.** Ways of spiritual assistance in the value congruence context

Three main information channels came to prominence in the assistance accessibility subcategory, such as written adverts in parishes, online announcements, and verbal information.

The latter consists of information provided to interested persons by state institutions and priests who are addressed. On the one hand, it is significant that employees of state institutions perceive the need for spiritual assistance, and on the other hand, this reveals certain ambiguity if the public religious institution keeps itself aloof from spiritual assistance that the informant needs alongside with psychological assistance. In this context, congruence of organizational and employee values positively influences employees' personal inspirations to help the person seeking assistance. At the same time, values declared by the organization are in line with the interested person's expectations, which promotes trust in the person providing assistance. However, incongruity of values of the religious organization and employees can manifest itself when the employee realizes that the declared high moral standards, based on faith in Christ, do not conform to the activity practice, particularly when injustice is experienced personally (Fig. 1).

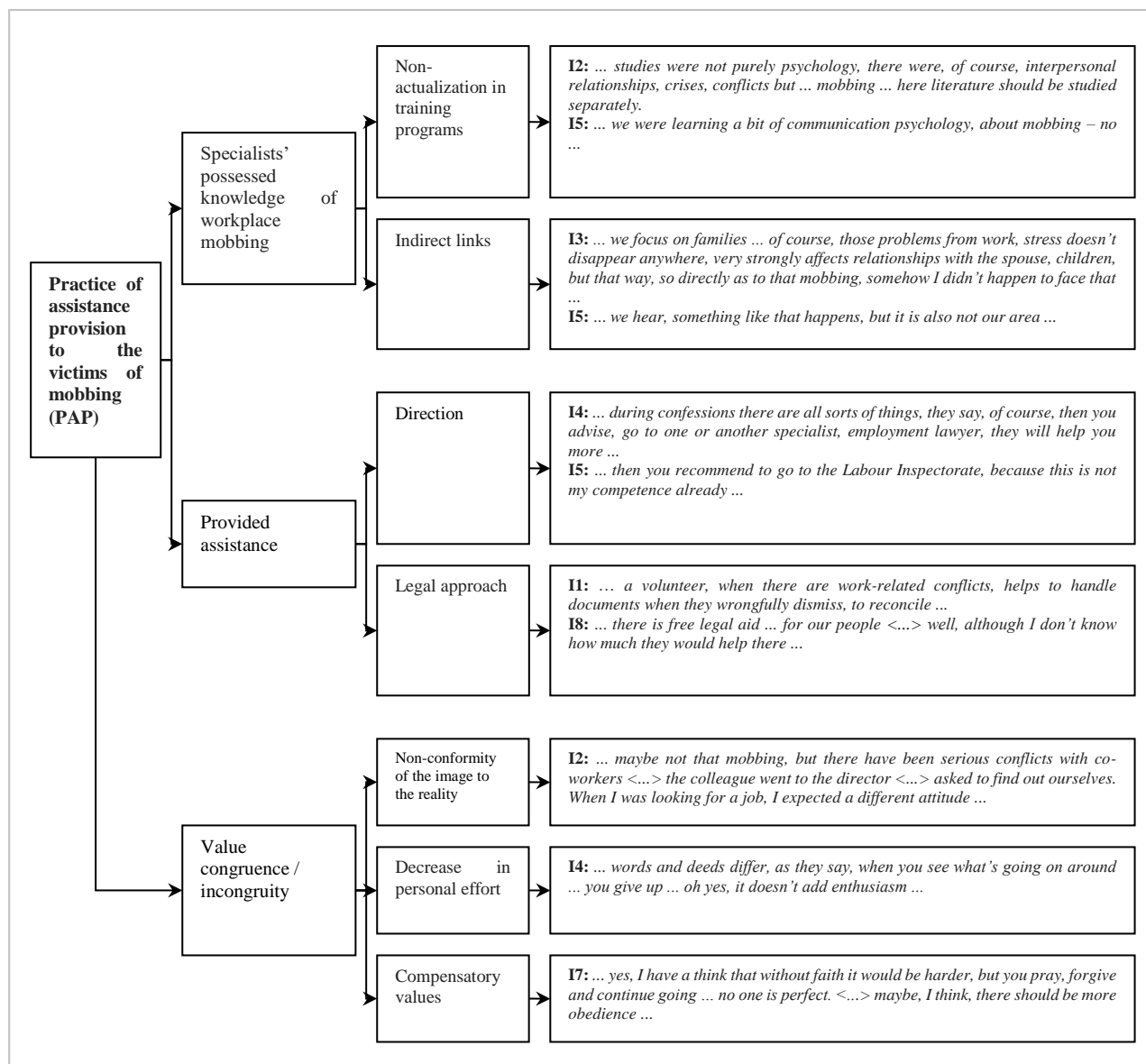
In the sub-category representing human resources, four fields of specialization came to prominence (two in the figure are named as further sub-categories), one of which – spiritual counsellors who have acquired joint education in theology and psychology – is overlapping. Given that assistance to the victims of workplace mobbing requires a broader range of competencies, the problem of the institution's *Organized competence development system* came to prominence in the sub-category *Competence development of professionals providing assistance*. That is, the institution focuses on free training, does not have a clear direction (free services are prioritized) and does not plan investments in employee training. Improvement is left for the personal initiative of employees themselves (further sub-category *Personal competence development*). Thus, in the context of identity of organizational and employee values, incongruity can emerge in two aspects. First, the employee realizing that the declared high moral values are inconsistent with their practical application (specifically, by allowing or forbidding to attend training) can suffer due to experienced injustice. Second, unsatisfied expectations can lead to disappointment. Alongside, the value aspect going beyond the organization's locus also becomes apparent. That is, religious values and a personally perceived mission can minimize the discontent experienced in the organization. However, there remains a risk that, employing religious inspirations, organizations saving money may opt out of employee competence development (Fig. 2).



**2 Fig.** Assistance providers' competencies and their development in the context of value congruence

In the category *Practice of assistance provision to the victims of mobbing* (PAP) (Fig. 3), three sub-categories are distinguished (*Specialists' possessed knowledge of workplace mobbing*, *Provided assistance*, and *Value congruence/incongruity*). Based on informants' answers, two further sub-categories are distinguished in the subcategory *Specialists' possessed knowledge of workplace mobbing* (*Non-actualization in training programs* and *Indirect links*). In the first case, the lack of basic knowledge about the phenomenon after finishing educational institutions is revealed; and in the second case, the possibilities to use knowledge acquired according to the training program. On the one hand, informants have certain knowledge of psychology and conflict management, acquired in the study process. On the other hand, clarifying questions reveal that the features of workplace mobbing are noticed both working

with interested persons and in the organization itself – in the relationships with co-workers. However, the possessed knowledge is insufficient to identify a specific conflict that is named as workplace mobbing. Therefore, the possibilities to help both victims as well as persons who happened to face such conflict themselves remain limited, preventing to make adequate decisions. This is related to the second sub-category (*Provided assistance*), which is divided into *Direction* and *Legal aid*. This can be described as a positive way of acting when the deficit of knowledge and abilities is perceived and the person is directed to other professionals. However, this is a formally functional solution, in a way opting out, because the informants' responses do not reveal any signs of spiritual support. In the sub-category Value congruence/ incongruity, three further sub-categories elaborating it are distinguished.



**3 Fig.** Practice of assistance provision to the victims of mobbing in the context of value congruence

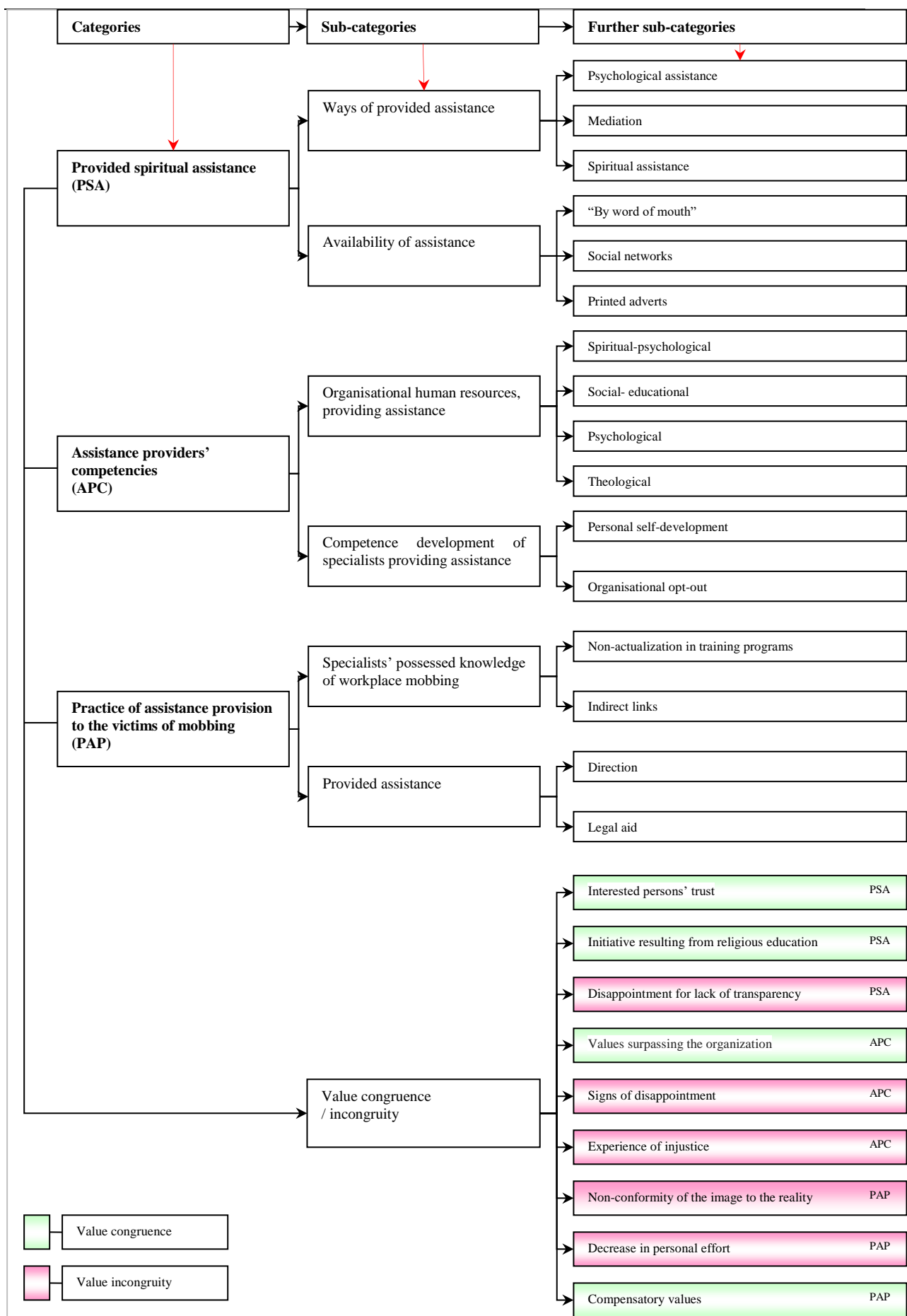
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On the one hand, value interactions between the organisational image and the future employee can be named as a certain pre-congruent stage. In this stage, the prospective employee detects identical values promoting the choice or non-selection of the organization. The second stage can be named as incongruity between expectations and reality or the stage determining disappointment, which can lead to reduction in the effort to do the job. On the other hand, Christian faith is not limited to the organizational context, and although religious values do not coincide with organizational ones, they carry out a specific compensatory function promoting performance of one's perceived duty (Fig. 3).

## DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the content of interview transcripts, informants' answers are divided into 3 main categories, 7 subcategories and 25 further sub-categories, which reveal informants' opinion how Lithuanian Christian organizations use their potential, providing assistance to the victims of workplace mobbing in the context of value congruence. This shows a broad panorama of available and unused opportunities and elaborates on the advantages and disadvantages, expanding aspects of assistance for sufferers (Fig. 4).

*First*, it comes to prominence that the ways of assistance vary from mediation to psychological counselling. Persons practicing spiritual counselling do not apply mediation, while the latter help in a narrow area; therefore, only partial, scattered assistance can reach the victims of workplace mobbing, because, as stated by G. Namie and R. Namie (2009), it is necessary to know the overall aspects of the phenomenon, including not only psychological coping strategies but national law matters as well. *Second*, informants' responses demonstrate that three communication channels are used to inform about assistance opportunities; however, communication is passive, disorganized, and the activity does not show any features of active strategy. Professionals lack knowledge of mobbing because this is disregarded in training programs and organizational development programs, although this can be partly offset by employees' personal initiatives. In this context, religious organizations as peculiarly institutionally organised Christian communities focus on narrow, traditionally perceived ways of assistance and do not consider the broader aspect of the community (Vveinhardt, Žukauskas, 2012; Moon et al., 2016), which can generate a positive effect of informal community participation.





**Fig. 4.** The potential of Christian organizations, helping the victims of workplace mobbing in the context of value congruence

Besides, as far as it can be inferred within the scope of this study, Christian organizations skimp on funding for employee competence development, which, bearing in mind employees' limited basic training at educational institutions, limits further opportunities to encompass broader contexts of assistance, learning about the ways of coping with workplace mobbing and learning to cope with it. When assistance providers are unable to identify the problem due to the lack of competence (Namie, Namie, 2009), the victim does not have the opportunity to receive adequate help. The narrow, well-established activity specialization creates a formalized, closed "self-satisfied" bureaucratic structure, which is not open to new challenges. It may be difficult for such structure to include assistance for persons who have suffered from workplace mobbing into the list of its activities. The results of the study demonstrate that in the context of religious organizations' assistance to the victims of mobbing, it makes sense to evaluate the aspects of value congruence/incongruity too. In Fig. 4, nine sub-categories are subdivided into further sub-categories of congruence and incongruity. These further sub-categories revealing value congruence are marked in green; while value incongruity, in pink. The results confirm that employee choices can be influenced by the image of the organization, which corresponds to the person's value expectations and positively influences employee loyalty and engagement in activities (Punjaisri, Wilson 2007), but non-conformity of declared values, emphasized in practice, promotes disappointment. This disappointment comes to prominence from realization that management decisions are wrong not only because of violation of legislation by illegal payment of salaries and deprivation of social guarantees but also in the further development area. In this case, personal improvement inspirations resulting from the outcomes of faith to help sufferers collide over the approaches of the organization that is as if involved in this value context at the level of declarations but in practice is far from it. On the one hand, the results confirm that the value level can be of service for relationships with interested persons to whom it is sought to provide assistance (Schaubroeck, Ganster, 1991; Verplanken, 2004), but on the other hand, it has not been identified that organisations promote this. At the same time, it should be noted that, based on the results, religious organizations fall under a peculiar "umbrella" of Christian faith, which promotes religious persons' trust, simultaneously to some extent compensating for the dissatisfaction experienced in the organization. This phenomenon arises not from the organizations themselves but from religiosity of employees entering them; therefore, there is a risk that religious organizations may tend to exploit this, minimizing their

own efforts. This, again, may adversely affect organizations' efforts, among other objectives, also to include assistance for persons who have suffered from workplace mobbing.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research broadens the spectrum of studies on assistance to the victims of workplace mobbing, as it investigates a new attitude, seeking to assess the possibilities of religious organizations' input in this area. Following the declared principle of assistance to the close person, religious organizations could make a significant contribution, providing spiritual assistance to victims, informing them and directing them to specialists. However, this potential is limited by three closely interrelated circumstances. *First*, the problem of workplace mobbing is not emphasized in organizations, although they encounter its consequences. This is determined not only by the gaps in training specialists working in organizations at higher education institutions, but also by the employee competence development policy implemented by the organisations themselves. In this context, organizations' passivity is contrasted with employee initiatives inspired by religious values, both seeking to improve and disseminating information about provided assistance, which is not used at the organizational level. *Second*, values declared by religious organizations promote persons who feel value identity to participate in religious organizations' activities. However, in practice, value incongruity is experienced. It is related to employee development and social guarantees, and when expectations are not met, this promotes disappointment. Organizations that do not appreciate the potential of value congruence in practical activities are taking risk not to exploit employees' personal initiatives that could be significant for the expansion of the range of provided services that could also include assistance to the victims of workplace mobbing. It therefore follows that, *third*, Christian organizations do not use available possibilities to help the victims of workplace mobbing due to the narrow specialization of their activities and manifestation of value incongruity suppressing employee initiatives inspired by religious faith.

*Limitations of the research:* only the employees of Roman Catholic religious organizations operating in Lithuania were interviewed; therefore, the research results do not reflect the situation in the organizations belonging to other confessions.

*Practical and scientific significance of the research.* The research results revealed both strengths and weaknesses of religious organizations' activities, which can be named as certain fields for further improvement. This is relevant not only expanding assistance to the victims of workplace mobbing, involving religious organizations as well, but also improving the quality

of the assistance provided so far. This is the first such type of research analyzing the possibilities of involving religious organizations in assistance provision to the victims of mobbing not only in Lithuania. A new attitude is proposed, which may be developed in the future. Distinguished categories, subcategories, and further subcategories may be of service designing a quantitative measurement instrument.

*Trends of further research.* In the future, it would make sense to repeat the study in religious organizations of other confessions as well as in several different countries. It is meaningful to conduct a quantitative study to perform a more accurate measurement of the situation.

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